

The Sunday School

LESSON 8—MAY 20, 1900

Parable of the Sower—Matt. 13:1-8; 18-23

Golden Text.—The seed is the word of God.—Luke 8:11.

Lesson Thought.—Each one of us, whether he will or not, is a sower either of good or of bad seed.

Time.—Not very long after the last lesson, in the autumn of A. D. 28.

Place.—On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum.

Persons.—The Baptist still in prison.

Home Readings

Matt. 13:1-23; Acts 14:8-20; John 6:59-66; Acts 2:37-47; John 15:1-8.

Lesson Text

1 On that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

2 And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach.

3 And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow;

4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured them:

5 And others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away.

7 And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up, and choked them:

8 And others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

18 Hear then ye the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the wayside.

20 And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth.

22 And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Lesson Links

The storm of opposition by the Pharisees had begun to gather about Jesus. They had heard him say on several occasions, "Thy sins are forgiven." And this they thought was blasphemy. They saw Christ's miracles, but said they were performed by the help of Beelzebub the Prince of the devils. Jesus had dared to teach contrary to their beliefs. He had taken the part of a poor sinful woman against one of their class, the self-righteous Pharisee, Simon, of our last lesson. From this time on until His death the storm gathered ever darker over the head of the Messiah.

Lesson Story

This lesson is about Jesus still near Capernaum, his residence now. Jesus was a lover of nature. The flowers, the processes of growth, the sea and the sky all spoke to

him. And this day he went out by the seaside. And as he sat there talking to some intimate friends perhaps, the multitudes began to gather about him. When the crowd became so great that he could no longer talk to them all with ease. Jesus entered into a boat standing there and spoke to the people as they gathered around the shore.

The Parable

He now began a new form of teaching the parable. It seemed that he used this form because it was adapted to convey truths with two results on those who heard. A parable has this peculiarity, that it conveys the truth plainly to those who wish to learn truth, but to those who do not it becomes mysterious and dark.

The Sower

And this parable was about a common sight and one with which his hearers would all be familiar. It is supposed that this was the season of the year when the grain was just coming up. And with the fertile plain of Gennesaret before him and with the recent sowing time and sower fresh in the minds of the people Jesus said, "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed some fell by the wayside, i. e. upon the paths which ran thru the unfenced fields. And on this hard ground where the rude brush harrow would cover it up, it was picked up by the birds. Some fell upon ground under which a few inches was a layer of rock. This ground was very thin and the seed quickly grew up, but the earth soon dried out and the hot sun withered the wheat, which had not much root. Some fell among thorn-roots. The thorns grew faster and ranker than the wheat and choked the latter so it brought no fruit to perfection. And some fell on good ground, free from briars and rocky ledges, and which was well plowed and fertile. This brought forth fruit, part of it thirty fold, part sixty fold and part a hundred fold."

The Interpretation

In the verses which are left out of our lesson, the disciples asked why Jesus taught in parables. And in reply He said it was because the people heard but would not understand. Then the disciples ask for an explanation of the meaning of this parable. This parable is about the soil.

The Sower

The Sower is Jesus himself. His word is the seed in this parable. In the next parable the children of the Kingdom are the seed.

The Wayside Soil

When any one hears the word of the Kingdom and does not understand it and further, does not try to understand it, then Satan comes and snatches it away out of his heart and also out of his mind. Are you such soil? Do you hear sermon after sermon, teaching after teaching, and yet remember scarcely any of it? It makes no impression on your mind and heart any more. If such is your case, you would better begin to pray. You are in a very dangerous condition. Pray

God to break up the hard ground of your heart.

The Rocky Soil

The soil over a ledge of rock is that heart which hears the word and immediately and with joy receives it. But the growth is too quick to last. A very emotional temperament is generally such a soil. Such are they who get religion at every revival and bubble over with the joy and gladness of their thin skinned emotions and then when the excitement is over never go to prayer meeting, have the back ache or head ache on Sunday mornings, think the sermons are dull, growl at the preacher, whine because people don't come around and shake their "ice bergy" hands, and smile into their sour faces. Such are they who always think the evangelist or new preacher is "so nice" and bewail the fate that prevents "their church" from having such a "nice" man for a pastor. Such always grasp new theories, and novel methods with zest and leave the "stayers" to continue the job while they stay at home, attend the card party, dance, or sociable, where they can smile on somebody's else wife or husband and berate "our puritanical minister."

But let tribulation arise, let temptations come and these are easy victims of the Devil, and become his willing dupes. Such is not the soil which produces fruit from the seed sown. But such is the soil which is known as "back sliders," "growlers," and thorns in the side of the church, on which the word of God falls but to wither and whose fate is to be scorched and baked by the Sun of Righteousness. Do you answer in the least to this description? If so pray God to thicken your heart's soil. Prayer is your only hope.

The Thorny Soil

The soil which received the seed among thorn-roots already planted and deep rooted, are those who hear the word, which is choked by the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches.

The care of the world means several things—anxiety to be in style, to be popular, to be held in esteem by men, whether it is right or wrong, anxiety to be learned for selfish purposes. Such are those who care more for good clothes than the Christian graces, for to be looked up to as smart and learned, than to have the blessed joy of humbly using talents or education for the betterment of others. Such prefer to be popular with men than to have the smile and favor of God. Such think they will not let this "care of the world" choke the spiritual life, but their heart is set on these worldly things and almost before they know it the thorns have choked the wheat.

By the "deceitfulness of riches" is meant the power which the desire of riches has in overcoming noble impulses. Such people, perhaps, meant to be good Christians, and before they sought to be rich, were exemplary workers for Christ. But, the day came when the dazzle of riches caught their fancy and then came the desire to be rich, which was followed by the determination to be rich